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Lunt - Oration - 1836

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FROM

Samuel S. Shaw

*Chief Justice Shaw
into the Capital Building
at Newburyport*

Mr Lunt's Oration,

— 1866 —

NEWBURYPORT ARTILLERY COMPANY



AN

Oration

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE NEWBURYPORT ARTILLERY COMPANY

UPON THEIR

FIFTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY,

July 4th, 1836.

BY GEORGE LUNT.

PRESS OF MORSS AND BREWSTER.

1836.

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1836. June 10,

ENTRANCE



ARMORY OF THE NEWBURYPORT ARTILLERY COMPANY, }
July 4th, 1836. }

VOTED, "That the thanks of the Company be tendered to the Hon. George Lunt, for the able, patriotic, and independent address, delivered by him this day, and that a copy be requested for publication."

In pursuance of the above vote, the subscribers respectfully solicit a copy for the press, and that it may be prepared at as early day as convenient. We have the honor, very respectfully, to subscribe ourselves,

Your ob't servants,

JOHN BRADBURY, }
ISAAC STEVENS, } Committee.,
F. J. COFFIN, }

HON. GEORGE LUNT.

JULY 18, 1836.

GENTLEMEN—

I cheerfully comply with your kind and polite request. I regret that I was prevented from devoting to the preparation of the address all that attention which I desired and which the importance of the subject demands. The same cause has prevented an earlier compliance with your wishes. But I trust you will excuse all this and believe me to be,

Very truly and respectfully,

Your friend and ser'vt,

GEORGE LUNT.

MESSRS JOHN BRADBURY, }
ISAAC STEVENS, } Officers of the Newburyport
F. J. COFFIN, } Artillery Company.

ORATION.

LET us believe that we have entered the house of God to-day for an exalted and ennobling purpose.— Whatever we count most valuable in this life clusters in a myriad of beautiful associations around the history of this morning, as it once rose in the midst of doubt and fearfulness and dismay. Whatever may be said, as it is sometimes said, of the monotony of similar services, let us, at least, who have professedly come up to renew our strength in the contemplation of its glory, remember all which it becomes us to remember with fervent and grateful hearts. The opportunity of celebrating the illustrious institutions of our forefathers has always been heretofore considered as a delightful and a pious privilege; and the religious observation of the returning festival has been regarded not merely as a duty and a pleasure, but as affording the surest pledge that those institutions would be perpetuated in the memory and affections of their descendants. It has never been neglected by any age or country, which had any thing in itself worthy of remembrance. Wherever the policy of civilized and christian life has not extended, nature

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has struck the electric spark in the bosom of the barbarian. Its influence has been powerful upon the human mind, because it strikes upon that common chord, which allies the good and the brave of all times. It has whispered in accents of irresistible persuasion to hearts, which other emotions might not have stirred. It has stayed the progress of degenerate manners. It has checked the career of profligate ambition. It has, in innumerable instances, animated the hosts of freedom as with one soul. It has repulsed the invader, whose footsteps would have polluted whatever was most lovely and consecrated in nature and in art. Wherever this feeling has existed in its purity, no insolent foeman ever ultimately triumphed. Wherever it has fallen into contempt, the first symptom of decay has been the terrific meteor, which portended sudden and inevitable destruction.

It is then a happy and a holy privilege, that we are able to say — “this day announced us free!” It is a matter of heartfelt thankfulness, that we may yet walk in the light of this liberty! It is a cause of honest exultation, that we have yet lost none of those things which that day proclaimed to be ours! That life is bright around us: that hope may spring unchecked within us: that our strength is unbroken and our courage high! That the promise of youth has ripened into the nerve of manhood: that the anticipations of other years have been infinitely more than realized: that we hold the heritage of our fathers yet unimpaired; and that we can still recount all, which made these things our own, without the blush of shame mantling upon our cheeks!

And yet there are other things to be remembered, which we are only too much inclined to forget. We look around us upon the happiness which crowns our

days, and do not think, as we ought often to think, of the toils, the privations, the sufferings, the sorrows, the sacrifices, the blood with which it was achieved. We cling to the treasure, but forget how easily it may escape our grasp. We do not estimate the cost, and thus learn a less appreciation of the value. The energies, which should be devoted to its maintenance, we apply to slighter and more ignoble objects. We count that permanent, which nothing but wisdom and integrity and virtue can maintain. We forget, that, although it may have required a thousand years to build a state, a day may, for a day has, laid it in the dust. There is scarcely a nation of Europe or the world, which has not been convulsed by the most terrible revolutions almost under our own eyes; and yet we seem to believe, that we, of all others, bear a charmed existence; that we are, in some sort, exempted from the common lot,—and,

Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Nothing can touch us farther!

I have said that the morning of the day we commemorate arose amidst uncertainty and doubt. Fear there certainly could not have been, for surely nothing but the most unshrinking fortitude could have calmly looked upon the too probable consequences of the measures, which those brave men so nobly conceived and executed. It is not so much to dash from the neck that heavy yoke, which has long oppressed and finally galls us to the quick. Animal instinct rouses us to this; and there is nothing on earth so abject, that cannot finally be stimulated to turn upon its tyrant. But it was not so much against oppression even commenced, as against oppression threatened, that the spirits of our fathers rebelled. It was for a doctrine,—a principle,—

for something which might come and grind them and their descendants,—that our forefathers, against the most fearful odds which were ever deliberately defied, forgetting and trampling under foot every personal and selfish consideration, gallantly and generously threw themselves upon the protection of their own good swords, and solemnly invoked the buckler of the God of battles for their defence.

It was indeed a most unequal contest. On the one hand was England, the most powerful nation upon earth, long claiming the mastery on the ocean, and the supremacy on land,—claiming to be invincible every where;—with unbounded resources, and all means and appliances for warfare,—trained to arms through long ages of glory and rivalry with other countries;—nursed by success into a pride equal to her pretensions, about to reduce to subjection her rebellious children, who might well seem to an indifferent observer, (if such a thing existed in the world, as indifference to that conflict,) soon to become the victims of an easy conquest. On the other hand was our own country, with a thin and scattered population,—weak in numbers and weaker in all things necessary for their purpose,—with a name in arms, which had not yet extended over the wide waste of waters between them and Europe,—a hostile garrison already taking possession of their chief towns,—some of their best citizens outlawed and proscribed,—their wives and children fleeing everywhere from the terrors which beleagured their homes,—with foes without and foes within,—every evil threatening themselves which ever waits upon the vanquished, unless a success which they hardly dared to hope, should ultimately crown their efforts,—with darkness behind them and danger upon

every side,—it was indeed an overpowering and disheartening spectacle! It was a scene not often paralleled in all its thrilling circumstances! But they had indeed within them a courage which no disaster could quench! They had indeed reinforced their hearts with something stronger than despair! Checked,—thwarted,—baffled,—they might oftentimes be,—but it was impossible that they should not be finally victorious.

But let us inquire, for a few moments, what can have been the origin of this singular confidence of theirs, which might have seemed so unwarrantable to one who looked only on the surface of things. It is true they had a good cause,—and this, in the hands of good men, is almost every thing: but although virtue certainly does eventually predominate, it is not always successful in attaining the direct object after which it aims. France, for instance, in pursuit of the same noble purpose which inspired our ancestors, beginning with the chimeras of an infidel philosophy, proceeded, as might be expected, until ‘madness ruled the hour,’ and blood and anarchy and despotism followed in the career of crime. It is true that the leading of Providence animated our fathers,—and piously and fervently did they supplicate its aid,—but they well knew that Providence enjoins upon men the exercise of the faculties and energies with which it has endowed them,—and thus when the crisis came which they had provoked, it found them, as it ought to find them, *prepared*.

I know it is commonly said, and said too as matter of astonishment, considering the stern stand they made at the first alarm of danger, that the revolution found our fathers engaged in the quiet pursuits of a peaceful life. But the excitements of the times had broken deeply in,

as we know, upon the routine of their ordinary avocations; and I shall, in a moment, allude to the kind of training which they had passed through to fit them for the struggle in which they were about to engage. And let it be, if you please, that they were, in the general acceptance of the terms, men of unwarlike habits and devoted to civic rather than military employments. But let the occasion come to men of their description, with a cause good enough to enlist the strength of their affections,—and call the husbandman from following his plough upon the mountain-side,—call the merchant from his desk and the artizan from his work-shop,—and put the weapons of defence into their hands,—and they sometimes make a terrible soldiery, these same peaceful citizens, with the enemy in front, and their homes and little ones behind them! They may not fight according to the rules of war. The weapons of their warfare may be only the crags of the precipice, and their breast-work only the rail-fences which did *not* shield the noble bosoms of our fathers. But no discipline can stand before them! Let the Tyrol answer for this, and the baffled march of Napoleon! Let the peasantry of Spain upon their vine-covered mountains! Let Bunker-hill and the retreating ranks of Britain! But this will not do for the more ordinary occasions of war; and can be relied upon only in those great exigencies, which enlist the most devoted enthusiasm of a patriot people.

But what was the actual fact in regard to their state of preparation? If we look at their history with a little attention we shall find them, I apprehend, not altogether so unfitted for the emergency, as a superficial view might suggest. Take their career from its commencement, and what was the true character of those 'dark grey

men,' who sat down upon these inhospitable shores in the midst of a howling winter? We are in the habit of looking at them chiefly in the light of their religious characteristics; and, thinking only of the quiet and peaceable lives, which christians desire, if possible to lead, we forget that, like the Hebrews of old, the weapons of their warfare were carnal as well as spiritual. Religious they certainly were,—for the influence of religion seems to have abased in their minds all the ordinary aspirations of the human heart,—and to have torn away from before their eyes all that false glitter, which so easily and forever allures and deceives the people of the world. Religious they certainly were,—for its spirit elevated, and as it were, glorified their nature, so that they deemed themselves pilgrims in soul as well as in body,—wanderers only upon earth, and the absent children and true inheritors of Heaven! Let us reverently thank God that such was their real character. If it had been otherwise, never could they have borne the heavy sufferings which oppressed them! Never could they have endured the heart-rending vicissitudes which thronged upon them! They might have returned to the land of their nativity, or wandered to some strange land, heart-broken and weary,—or they might have become the prey of the savage,—and in this pleasant heritage of theirs, the wilderness and the solitary place might still have retained all their original desolation. But the hosts of God encamped around their dwellings and they were safe!

But besides the stern inflexibility of their religious faith and their equally unbending opinions upon the subject of civil liberty, they brought with them from home

the outlines of that system of military discipline, which the country of their birth had long and jealously cherished; and which it was one of their chiefest cares to arrange into a system of thorough usefulness in their new and dangerous neighborhood. For I find it recorded, that, within two months of the time of their landing, Miles Standish (a gallant name) was chosen captain, and "received authority to command in military affairs." They had resisted and their friends at home were then resisting with all the just indignation and energy of free-born men, the introduction of standing armies, whose only purpose could be to trample upon the people and awe the parliament into submission to the royal will. They knew well that no such army was necessary for the defence nor consistent with the safety of a brave and generous nation. They knew well that he who depends upon the arm of another man for his constant defence becomes the slave of him in whom he puts his trust. It is true, that the early pilgrims themselves had not been called upon to buckle on their swords in the conflict soon about to commence, for the sacred rights of man against kingly prerogative and usurpation. But they were men who would have waited for the battle upon their native soil, could they only have anticipated its coming. For if they were not themselves required to do battle in arms for this great cause, they were the friends, the relatives, the brothers of those who did so,—men of the same stamp and character and sentiments, and habits and modes of life, with those who were with Hamden, when all the mortal part of his great and glorious being perished upon the fatal field at Chalgrove,—who were with Cromwell at Dunbar and Naseby and

Worcester,—and who withstood, like the unshaken rocks of the eternal hills, the fierce charge of fiery Rupert and his cavalry and saved their fainting army from destruction upon the plain of Newberry! And never, perhaps, did there exist,—although they were but the train-bands of London and of the villages of England,—a host of warriors so invincible as these, since the Israelites marched forward to an assured and easy victory to the sound of the trumpet of Gideon!

But there was a contest for them far more terrible than any in which their compatriots could be engaged: for even civil war, shocking and repulsive as it is in most of its details, has an occasional trait,—here and there a glimpse of generous and honorable feeling, which shews that the human heart has not been utterly degraded, under some of the most unfavorable circumstances in which it ever appears. Hemmed in on all sides by a ferocious, artful, active, and, whatever may be said, a most skilful foe, their condition required of the people of the colony the watchfulness and the discipline of an armed camp. The commencement of general hostilities was indeed long deferred,—but there were occasional skirmishes enough, and acts enough of depredation and violence, to make their lives, until a very late period in their colonial existence, an entire scene, if not of warfare, at least of thorough and constant military organization. And what a warfare it was! Not for any of those things which ordinarily call the powers of men into severe action,—not for the memory of their ancestors,—not for their own renown,—not even for the honor of a widely extended and a prosperous country;—not such a warfare as their friends at home were then waging,

carried onward by the stern fervor of religious enthusiasm, buoyed up by the confidence that they were the champions of civil liberty and conscious that the eyes of all Europe were upon them ; — but alone, in a savage wilderness, surrounded by still more savage men, fighting for the existence of themselves and their families, — certain that victory could bring them no glory and that defeat must involve them and theirs in inevitable and horrible destruction ! But I do not mean that the great mass of the people were commonly employed in military service. There were long, very long intervals of almost entire peace ; and the colonists builded and planted and found leisure for the ordinary pursuits of civil life. But there was scarcely a period which did not require some service from the Standishes and the Churches and their intrepid and devoted followers. And when the great struggle with the aborigines approached and Philip's war finally commenced, we may judge something of the extent as well as the severity of their duty from the fact, that, in the year 1675, from the town of Newbury alone, sixtyseven men, nearly half its able population, were drafted for this single service ! From the town of Newbury alone ! From this beautiful and quiet spot, made peaceful by their perils and sufferings ; and where our voices are now essaying to record their praises in tones only too cold for their generous and heroic hearts. A portion of them were of that gallant band of youthful warriors, so touchingly and beautifully described in the history of their times, as the "Flower of Essex," who perished by the hands of the remorseless savage at Bloody Brook.

Take them, however, in their career from the earliest

period of their arrival in this country down to the close of the revolutionary war, and I presume that the severity of their military service was beyond all comparison greater than that of any other civilized people of modern times. To exhibit something of their actual state of preparation in the munitions of war, I find it related in the history of the times, that when Governor Winthrop and his family arrived in Boston in November of the year 1631, "they were honored with a discharge of artillery, and the militia assembled and entertained them with a guard and divers vollies." It might be tedious to detail upon this occasion all the particular contests in which they were engaged. Allow me only to illustrate my position by a momentary glance at some of their principal conflicts. It was about the year 1630, that, in consequence of danger apprehended by the Colony of Massachusetts, a union for mutual defence was formed between them and the Colony at Plymouth; in order to establish which the Governor, with the Revd. Mr Wilson and others, proceeded to the latter place, forty miles through the wilderness, on foot. In 1634 commenced the difficulties with the Pequots, until the war fully broke out with that fierce and intractable people and ended only with their almost utter extermination in 1637. In the year 1643, the New England colonies, in consequence of their exposure to foreign and domestic enemies, entered as their articles say "into a firm and perpetual league, offensive and defensive." In less than ten years from this period, "in regard", as it is said, "of the many appearances of danger towards the country," a council of war was appointed with "power to issue warrants, to press men and to give commissions to chief officers." Two years later we find Cromwell himself

requiring New England to furnish troops for the reduction of the Dutch, who were settled in New York, and of these, 500 men, another tremendous draft, were furnished by Massachusetts alone. And this was only thirtyfour years after they first set foot on these shores that so large a levy was made upon the resources of the feeble settlement. At a period about twenty years subsequent, after various less important difficulties with the Indians, that terrible war, known as King Philip's, commenced in its full fury, which for nearly a year threatened the very existence of all the colonies of New England. After the termination of this war, no serious disturbance appears to have occurred until twelve years subsequently in 1688, when the Indians, urged on and aided by the French, carried terror and destruction along the whole northern and eastern frontier; and this contest continued, with little intermission and various degrees of violence, until the peace of Ryswick in 1698. But their swords did not even then long sleep in their scabbards: for in 1703, less than five years afterwards, they were unsheathed against their old enemies the French and Indians, nor was there any suspension of hostilities until the peace of Utrecht in 1712. It is remarked by a historian of the times, that the provinces "had been bleeding almost forty years; and that such had been the loss of men in Massachusetts, by their dreadful wars, that the inhabitants had not doubled in half a century;" and the same remark may be made respecting the period from 1722 to 1762. But none of these things seem to have moved them from their purpose; and they went forward again and again to engage in warfare with their ferocious foe, with unbroken,—unbroken, did I say,—with renewed and invigorated energies! In 1744, the

war commenced again in earnest between England and France and Spain; and at the very first intimation of hostilities, we find Massachusetts projecting an attack upon the distant and strongly fortified post of Louisbourg, "the Dunkirk of America," which terminated in its complete reduction: and this war, in which France, assisted by her savage allies, struggled for existence upon this continent, commenced anew in 1754 and continued through the long period of seven years, until Ticonderoga and Crown Point and Quebec finally submitted to the English arms, and at length in the year 1762 they were every where victorious; and our fathers took that brief repose which was to fit them for a different and a more illustrious conflict. It is in this war, known commonly as the "old French war," that we begin to meet the names now most familiar upon our lips. It is here that we first find that one great name, destined through all ages to be the watchword of Liberty! It is here that we discover the school which disciplined those noble spirits, who were called, in a few short years, to exert their zeal and skilfulness in the preparation of the minute-men of Massachusetts, and who soon directed their generous courage upon the venerated fields of Concord and Lexington and Bunker-hill.

It is not my purpose to pursue them farther. Their story is written every where. Let it be enough for me to remark in alluding to the ties which connect your elegant and disciplined corps, gentlemen, with that day of great things, that it was formed towards the middle of the Revolutionary struggle, and at a period of the war perhaps more discouraging than any which occurred during its whole progress. For it was at a time when the first flush of enthusiasm had passed away; — when,

notwithstanding their many brilliant successes, there were many disheartening circumstances to cloud the prospects of our citizens; and when their spirits might well have been broken, if the spirits of brave and good men were not always superior to the vicissitudes of fortune. As it was, however, the original founders of your company formed a portion of that band of heroic citizens, who bared their bosoms in defence of their country's rights: and it is a source of pleasure and satisfaction to reflect, that the term of their service was passed under the immediate command of that illustrious man, now with God, who was a few short years ago the honored guest of the great Republic, which he assisted to found, and continued to be, while he lived, the glory and delight of the friends of freedom throughout the civilized world. It has been my object merely to recall your attention to one of the institutions of our fathers, which they themselves guarded with the most anxious carefulness and which they often found of the utmost service in the times of their utmost need. "A well regulated militia is necessary to the security of a free state," is one of the maxims of the constitution which they transmitted to us, and which has been considered so eminent for the deep sagacity and practical excellence of its provisions. It may perhaps be prudent for us to reflect whether this doctrine be really founded in true wisdom, or, whether having grown so much wiser than they were in many other material respects, we may not on this point also have outstripped the results of their old-fashioned experience. Of the necessity for maintaining any degree of military discipline, it certainly is important that we should deliberately judge. The ancient system, which was, perhaps, in some of its features unfitted for the improved

condition of society, appears latterly to have fallen into great disrepute, except where an occasional association, like yours, gentlemen, seems to have retained all the spirit of an earlier period ; and while it has advanced with the advancing age in every external circumstance, has still presented an unbroken front to the corrupting influences of the times. But when we undertake to say that these things are unsuited to the temper of the times, we must not forget that the opinions of men constitute this very temper ; and that although one set of opinions may prevail with a certain portion of the community, yet another may entertain sentiments of a character altogether opposite and inconsistent. One community may determine that it will live in a condition of profound peace. But if its nearest neighbors commence immediately a series of constant aggressions, the element of peace is annihilated of course, and it would be the very madness of folly to insist upon the maintenance of a theory at once so absurd and impracticable. The actual state of this country, for the last twenty years, may indeed fairly enough account for the disuse into which military affairs have fallen ; but I am sure that nothing can palliate that negligence which has delayed a complete and ready system of organization for that strong arm of defence, which has so often proved our only human protection. I know it was often remarked, not many years since, that the genius of this age was eminently pacific ; and that we, of all nations, were hardly exposed to the remotest chance of conflict with a foreign power. But this was said soon after a period when every field of Europe had been drenched in blood ; when the sound of arms had scarcely ceased in our own

ears, and when men's hearts might well have been sick of the direful images which war only too truly calls into being. But whether the signs of those times indicated the unquiet slumber from which the nations of the earth would soon again be startled, or whether they were the tokens of that prophetic day, long looked for, but which still delays its far-off coming, let the convulsions and revolutions and fearful warfares of a later date bear witness. I need say nothing of the contests going on at this very moment in Europe, upon this continent, or those of a more inconsiderable nature upon the borders of our own land. Whatever may be their causes, they exhibit the character of the human race in the same aspect in which it has heretofore been observed; with its passions untamed, and its general features the same. And who shall say what other and more serious commotions are yet in the bosom of the future, even now darkly threatening to involve us and others in their incalculable consequences. Let it be enough to warn us of our responsibilities, I will not say, dangers, that a few months only have rolled over us from a day, which found us totally and fearfully unprepared for an emergency, by no means impossible, however unlikely the event seriously was.

But in opposition to the opinion of very high authority, I cannot believe that we are in danger of being engaged in any direct collision with an European power, from causes arising within our own territory. The people of Europe are likely to have engagements enough of their own to occupy all their attention, and it might prove a mistaken policy, which led them to interfere in questions upon this continent, which are our own proper and pe-

culiar care. But I leave it to politicians to consider whether there is not a manner in which we may yet become embroiled, which certainly appears to me to be much more reasonable. If the troubles already existing and increasing in the neighboring provincial governments of England, should ever arrive at their probable crisis;— if a struggle for independence should ever ensue, — I confess I do believe, that it may offer to this country its first great temptation to follow in the footsteps of ancient republics, in the grapple for an extended territory and a broader dominion. Whether she will resist the alluring prize is yet to be seen. Should she not do so, and should the revolution not be effected by peaceful means, the troops of New England again may scale the heights of Abraham, and plant their banners where their fathers did upon the subjugated ramparts of Quebec. And then having gathered into her vast embrace the northern territory of this mighty continent, the people of Southern America may deem it wise, [as the ancient nations bent the footstool of Rome, to seek the aid of her protection and bow to the authority of her power!

At any rate, however, so long as the constitutional peculiarities of our race continue the same, I believe that we must consider ourselves amenable to the ordinary dictates of experience. It is impossible in the nature of things that we should escape some difficulties amongst ourselves. The singularity of our case seems to me to consist in this, that we have always continued so free from domestic disturbances. A commercial country, liable at all times to the influx of an alien population, and often of the lowest and worst educated portion, — unacquainted with and indifferent to our laws, our customs,

our religious habits, and all that has been so peculiarly ours;—an immensely extended country, affording every facility for the introduction of foreign vices, and advancing with such rapidity as to bring forward only too readily corruptions of native growth, — with a thousand causes of excitement and tumult constantly occurring and growing every day more irritating than before, — how can we expect to escape from those evils which have agitated other nations! How can we expect to be exempted in future from those things which have already occurred at our very doors! I dislike the unpleasant task of drawing a disagreeable picture. But if the view I take be the true one, it is best that we should look upon it without shrinking. It is not, perhaps, likely that the scenes to which I have alluded, will prove of very frequent occurrence. But ought they ever to be contemplated as likely to occur without a provision for the ready means of prevention and remedy. For who can trust to the ungovernable passions of an excited populace! Who that has life, or property, or any other thing that is dear to him, can feel that he is safe for an instant under a government which cannot enforce and maintain its laws! Our sagacious forefathers foresaw all this, and with their usual wisdom provided the lawful means of sustaining the civil arm, when it became too weak to withstand the excesses of popular violence. And there is no other means for us;—yes, there is one more, if we choose to adopt it, although the remedy, I confess, might be bitterer in the taking and more difficult in its dislodgment than any disorder which could generally affect the body politic. But let us not pursue this unpleasant theme. It is a contingency which can never

happen upon this free soil. The period cannot, must not arrive, when we shall be willing that the bristling bayonets of an hired soldiery shall pollute the sacredness of our homes, — when we shall permit ourselves to be frowned into submission under the cannon of foreign mercenaries, planted upon the heights which command our dwelling-places and recall our fathers' glory; — when their feet shall trample us into the dust upon the fields consecrated by the precious blood that again would call to us from the ground! No, my friends, if we would be free, — as free we will be, — our own hands must make our only safety! If we would preserve the order of society and maintain the authority of the laws, we must do the work ourselves. The courage we need must be in our own hearts, — the strength we require in our own right hands! Our only system of police, — our only barrier of defence, — must belong to the people, be constituted by the people, and so formed that it shall return to the people, when its duty is discharged, to mingle again, with feelings and principles and habits unchanged, in the ordinary pursuits and business of life. And this is the true kind of association, when it is contrived with skill, maintained with spirit, and based upon the most thorough equalization of duty, which constitutes the only and the invincible bulwark of a state. And to this, believe me, sooner or later, we must come.

The few and hasty remarks, gentlemen, which I have thus thrown together, are now drawing to a close. There are many topics connected with the history of this day, with which I might have detained you: and there are, I regret to say, some wild and mischievous opinions abroad upon the more particular subject of my discourse, which some might think proper to be combatted here. But I have purposely avoided their discussion. I would

not, on such an occasion, willingly minister to any unnecessary excitement. They are scarcely deserving of a passing notice. Common sense teaches us more, in this respect, than any vague and unfounded theories; and whenever the time arrives, which requires our services, I venture to predict that we shall not hesitate for the purpose of settling abstract points of unprofitable doctrine. The heart's desire of the good man will always be for peace; but he only deserves its blessings, who is willing to sacrifice his life, if need be, for all that makes it a valuable or an honorable possession.

But let not us forget, my friends, that we are men to whom the deepest of all mortal trusts has been committed. The waves of time are hurrying us forward over an unfathomable sea. No human eye can scrutinize the infinite depths which envelope the future. It may be the destiny of this great republic only to afford a more startling and terrible lesson for the abuse of privileges, than has ever yet been exhibited to the generations of men. It may be that the fame of our ancestors is soon to become but as a tale that is told: that the heroic but mournful story of their lives, now our glory, is to become our shame; and that all these noble institutions of theirs and whatever of honor and prosperity we have since acquired, is soon to be swept away as with the besom of destruction. It may be, that, outstripping the records of experience, in her rapid progress along the tide of time, she shall gradually extend the dominions of her arts and arms over the uncouthed myriads of a boundless continent; and becoming illustrious in all that dignifies the character of man, as well as irresistible in the grasp of her power, she shall make her voice heard and her law obeyed far beyond the shores of the resounding sea, and carry to the subjects of other and distant lands

the light of her knowledge and the authority of her name !

We know, indeed, that a period shall finally arrive, when all wars and fightings and tumults shall cease ; and when all nations shall dwell together in the bonds of christian fellowship and brotherhood. But God, only, in the inscrutable dispensations of his providence, can hasten the advent of that holy and happy time. Until that day arrives, guided by the light of reason and scripture and experience, we must execute his purposes by the means which he has put into the hands of the creatures of his will. The hosts of Europe, who followed the banner of the Cross to the burning plains of Syria, opened the passage for the commerce of the world. The conquest of Britain, by the Roman arms, paved the way for the conversion of christendom. The long and bloody struggle of our forefathers led to the establishment of an empire upon this soil, whose influence upon the future destinies of the human race even now promises to outstrip the most extended anticipations of the sublimest philanthropy. And it seems but probable, that the ordinary means, which have been used for the civilization and refinement and the administration of the affairs of society, will still be applied to the same end. In the mean time, it becomes us to discharge the duties devolving upon us, unless we would be unfaithful to the memory of our ancestors and still more unfaithful to the cause of posterity. Let us never forget that the best of our services and all that is ours, belongs entirely to our country. Let us, then, gratefully venerate the recollection of our fathers. Still let us rear upon the spots, where their honored dust reposes, the monuments, which shall perpetuate their fame. Still, upon occasions like this, let us pour forth, in honor of

their virtues, the best and warmest feelings of our hearts. Still, let us encourage the emulation of their great and good example! Their perils and trials and sufferings can never indeed be ours. But the time may come requiring of us our own peculiar dangers and sacrifices, and, it may be, calling upon us to meet the same noble and generous deaths which they dared for their country. Should that period ever arrive, may the same spirit animate us which inspired their fervent and heroic bosoms! So that our children, standing in our places to commemorate our lives, may say of us, as in the beautiful language of the English poet we may well say of those illustrious men, who have left us to be the guardians as well as the inheritors of their glory,—

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
With all their country's wishes blest !
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than fancy's feet have ever trod !

By spirit hands their knell is rung, —
By forms unseen their dirge is sung, —
There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay,
And Freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there !







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